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SUBJECT: FOR RELEASE: AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO PAIPA UNDERSCORES  
JUDICIAL REFORM SUCCESSES

REF: BOGOTA 3375

SUMMARY

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¶1. (SBU) The Ambassador traveled to Paipa, Boyaca, on November 5 to speak at the Supreme Court-organized National Summit of General Jurisdiction, a conference which brought together judges from all over Colombia. The Ambassador stressed the importance of access to justice during Colombia's journey from lawlessness to stability, and gave the assembled judiciary credit for making Colombia better off today. During their private conversation, Boyaca Governor Jose Roza Millan highlighted the importance of investment in traditional agriculture, as well as mining exploration for coal and emeralds. He also sought to develop Boyaca's tourism industry, taking advantage of soon to begin charter flights to Houston. The Ambassador also visited a local dairy farm to view a USDA-supported Foot and Mouth Disease monitoring program. END SUMMARY.

SUPREME COURT-SPONSORED CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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¶2. (U) At invitation by the Court, the Ambassador attended a lunch sponsored by the Supreme Court and delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the XII Encuentro de la Jurisdiccion Ordinaria, the twelfth national Summit of General Jurisdiction. General Jurisdiction includes civil, family, labor, and criminal matters, and the main theme of this year's conference was access to justice. Attendees included Supreme Court judges, appellate judges, lower level judges, law professors, and students. USAID and DOJ facilitated the attendance of two U.S. federal judges: Edward Prado, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and David Briones, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas (El Paso), both of whom made presentations at the conference.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador spoke of the importance of access to justice during Colombia's journey from lawlessness to stability over the past ten years, and gave the assembled judiciary credit for making Colombia better off today. He highlighted the last decade as a period of successful collaboration between the judicial and legal systems of Colombia and the U.S., and noted that Colombia has experienced this period of relative peace with help from a strong justice system. The Ambassador emphasized how access to justice instills confidence which builds peace. He recalled the

sacrifice made by 11 Supreme Court magistrates assassinated in the attack on the Bogota Justice Palace of November 6-7, 1985. He finished by reminding the audience sacrifices such as these are not in vain, and that as they contemplate judicial access and peace in the country, U.S. support will continue. The summit comes at a time when tensions between the Supreme Court and the Uribe administration remain strained, particularly over the Court's refusal, to date, to accept any of Uribe's nominees to be the new prosecutor general.

#### GOVERNOR OF BOYACA UNDERLINES TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

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14. (U) The Ambassador met with Jose Rozo Millan, the Governor of Boyaca, to discuss the Governor's development plans in his department. The Governor highlighted the importance of continued investment in traditional agriculture, as well as mining exploration for coal and emeralds. The Governor is eager to tap the department's resources to turn it into a bona fide tourism destination. A lack of transport infrastructure remains an impediment to these plans, but the Governor hopes to address improvements in ground transport, including a highway link to Bogota and new rail links to improve export routes. He hopes that charter flights to Boyaca from Houston and Cartagena will begin soon, as there is currently no international service at any of the

department's four airports. The Ambassador queried how the security situation in Boyaca would affect the development plans. The Governor informed the Ambassador that although Boyaca is the most secure department in Colombia, security is his first priority and is essential to his tourism plans. The Ambassador agreed that threats from guerrillas, drug-traffickers and the shared border with Venezuela remain, and outlined the Embassy's Colombia Strategic Development Initiative, which targets specific zones in Colombia where similar threats exist.

#### FARM VISIT HIGHLIGHTS USG SUPPORT OF FMD MONITORING PROGRAM

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15. (U) Ambassador Brownfield visited the San Joaquin dairy farm to view the Colombian Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) monitoring program. The program is part of a cooperative agreement between U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture's regulatory agency (ICA) to eradicate FMD in Colombia. USDA currently contributes financial (USD \$650,000 for FY 2010) and technical support to the program. Colombia received FMD-free status with vaccination from the World Organization of Animal Health in 2008. The farm owner, ICA and Colombian Cattlemen Federation (Fedegan) officials briefed the Ambassador on the vaccination program's successes and operations. The Paipa ICA office administers the vaccination program in approximately 26,000 farms in 48 municipalities across the region, with an average of three cows per farm. Fedegan reports almost 100% vaccination success in the region. Colombian dairy companies will not accept milk from dairy farms without a Fedegan certificate of vaccination. Fedegan uses education about the importance of vaccination as the main tool to ensure full vaccination coverage in the region. The Ambassador praised the long-standing U.S.-Colombian collaboration to eliminate FMD, to provide a better life for farmers and improve bilateral commerce between the two countries.

#### NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRESS COVERAGE

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16. (U) Press coverage of the Ambassador's visit to Paipa was varied. The majority of coverage focused on his answer to a question during a press gaggle at the conference regarding the trial of a former Colombian Navy Admiral for involvement in narcotics trafficking (Reftel). Both the conference and the visit to the dairy farm were open to the press. Coverage of the conference and the Ambassador's remarks included stories in leading national and regional papers, television, and radio.  
BROWNFIELD